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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Saturday, December 16, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FOR A SHINING CHRISTMAS." Information approved by the Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Shining lights and gleaming metals, sparkling glass and glittering reflections--all these are part of the traditional Christmas picture. You can do a good deal toward creating this bright and shining Christmas picture in your home just by a little skillful polishing.

You can make the colored lights from the tree on Christmas Eve repeat themselves all around the room if you polish your metal pieces and your mirrors so they can catch every reflection. And if you polish your brass and irons, Santa Claus will find the hearth fire looking doubly bright when he comes down the chimney. If you've cleaned the windows before Christmas, they'll let in light from outdoors to make the house especially cheerful for Christmas breakfast. And if you polish the table-silver and shine your glass pieces, the candles on the dinner table will show up again and again at every guest's place. Even the polished furniture and the waxed floor can do their bit of Christmas shining.

Here are a few tips on polishing your brass and copper. Grandmother used buttermilk, vinegar, tomato, rhubarb, apples or lemon rind to polish her copper kettles and brass pieces. She learned from experience that mild acids remove the tarnish from these metals. Another favorite old-fashioned polish was vinegar and salt. Today metal experts agree with grandmother. They say hot vinegar and salt is still an excellent cleaner for brass or copper. Rub this hot solution over the metal. Then wash the metal in hot soapy water, rinse with hot clear water, and dry thoroughly. If you want a high polish, you can then shine the metal with

fine chalk powder made into paste with water. Or you can scour the metal with powdered rottenstone and oil. After polishing, wash, rinse and dry brass and copper.

By the way, powdered chalk sells under the name of whiting. Whiting is one of the safe scouring materials because it doesn't scratch. You can buy whiting powder at a drug store. Rottenstone is another mild and gentle scourer. Rottenstone is for sale at paint stores. You usually moisten whiting with water, and rottenstone with oil for polishing.

Aluminum once was a humble metal for the kitchen. Now you find it in trays and bowls and other decorative and useful articles all over the house. Aluminum happens to be another metal you can brighten up with mild acid, usually vinegar. But instead of using a scouring powder on aluminum, use very fine steel wool.

Perhaps you have some nice pewter you want to shine up for Christmas. Pewter is a very soft metal. It scratches and dents easily. So when you scour it use only whiting paste. Then wash in hot soapy water, rinse and dry the metal.

Now with all the metals gleaming, let's see how to bring out clear reflections in the looking glass.

When you wash a mirror, take great care not to get the back wet. That may damage the quicksilver. Here's a dry method of cleaning mirror or glass. Mix whiting or some fine commercial scouring powder with a little water or alcohol to make a paste. Rub this paste over the glass and let it dry on in a thin layer. Then rub it off with a soft cloth or soft paper.

By the way, whiting paste is an excellent cleaner for the glass over pictures. And it is the best cleaner for windows in cold weather. You see, if you wash windows with water, your cloth or sponge may freeze, or the water may freeze on the glass. But the little moisture in the whiting paste will evaporate before it freezes. You can rub the dry paste off with a dry cloth. But

you clean the rest of the room. Any one of the spray cleaners for windows is also easy to use.

Now about cleaning silver. If you have a large family and try to polish every piece of silver separately, you'll have to spend many long tiresome hours at the job. A much quicker and easier method is to clean several pieces at a time by dipping the silver in an aluminum pan containing salt and soda in boiling water.

Here's how to clean silver by this method: begin by shining up your aluminum pan. (You must use aluminum, and you must have it bright to do the job.) Fill the bright aluminum pan about two-thirds full of water. To each quart of water add a teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of baking soda. When the water begins to boil, place your tarnished silver in it so that each piece either touches the aluminum pan, or touches another piece of silver that is in contact with the aluminum. Place the silver in the hot solution for one or 2 minutes until the tarnish comes off. Then lift out the hot silver with tongs, wash it in soap suds, then rinse and dry. Of course, if you want a more satiny finish on your silver, you can add extra shine with silver polish.

Here's a precaution or two about this quick method of cleaning silver. Don't leave silver more than a few minutes in the hot solution. And don't use this method for silver knives with hollow handles or the handles may come off in the boiling water. Be sure the silver gets a thorough wash and rinse after cleaning.

For the silver that you must polish by hand, you can buy silver polish, or you can make your own. Here's a recipe for homemade silver polish: Mix a fourth cup of soap jelly with a fourth cup of fine whiting powder. Then add 1 teaspoon of household ammonia or 1 teaspoon of denatured alcohol.

That's all the polishing tips for today. Here's wishing you a bright and shining Christmas.

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